IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (New): A hydrocarbon reforming catalyst comprising a carrier containing (a) at least one compound selected from the group consisting of lanthanum oxide, cerium oxide, and zirconium oxide, (b) manganese oxide, (c) alumina, and (d), supported on the carrier, at least one noble metal component selected from the group consisting of a ruthenium component, a platinum component, a rhodium component, a palladium component, and an iridium component.

Claim 20 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 19, wherein the carrier is produced by impregnating an alumina (c) with (a') at least one compound selected from the group consisting of a lanthanum compound, a cerium compound, and a zirconium compound, and (b') a manganese compound, and calcining the impregnated alumina carrier.

Claim 21 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 20, wherein the impregnated alumina is calcined at 800 to 1,000°C.

Claim 22 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 19, wherein the carrier is produced by impregnating alumina (c) with (a') at least one compound selected from the group consisting of a lanthanum compound, a cerium compound, and a zirconium compound; calcining the impregnated alumina carrier at 400 to 600°C;

impregnating the calcined carrier with (b') a manganese compound; and calcining the thus-impregnated carrier at 800 to 1,000°C.

Claim 23 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 19, wherein the amount of at least one compound selected from the group consisting of lanthanum oxide, cerium oxide, and zirconium oxide (a) is 1 to 20 mass% with respect to that of the reforming catalyst.

Claim 24 (New): A hydrocarbon reforming catalyst comprising a carrier containing (f) silicon oxide, (b) manganese oxide, (c) alumina, and (d), supported on the carrier, at least one noble metal component selected from the group consisting of a ruthenium component, a platinum component, a rhodium component, a palladium component, and an iridium component.

Claim 25 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 24, wherein the carrier is produced by impregnating alumina (c) with a silicon compound (f') and calcining the impregnated alumina, and, subsequently, impregnating the calcined alumina with a manganese compound (b') and calcining the thus-impregnated alumina.

Claim 26 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 24, wherein the carrier is produced by impregnating alumina (c) with a manganese compound (b') and calcining the impregnated alumina, and, subsequently impregnating the calcined alumina with a silicon compound (f') and calcining the thus-impregnated alumina.

Claim 27 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 24, wherein the carrier is produced by mixing a manganese compound (b') and a silicon compound (f'), impregnating alumina (c) simultaneously with the mixture of compounds, and calcining the impregnated alumina.

Claim 28 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 24, wherein the silicon compound (f') is tetraethoxysilane.

Claim 29 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 24, which has a silicon oxide (f) content of 1 to 20 mass%.

Claim 30 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 20, wherein the manganese compound (b') is manganese acetate.

Claim 31 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 19, wherein said at least one noble metal component (d) selected from the group consisting of a ruthenium component, a platinum component, a rhodium component, a palladium component, and an iridium component is contained in the reforming catalyst in an amount of 0.1 to 8 mass% as reduced to noble metal element(s).

Claim 32 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 19, wherein the manganese oxide (b) is contained in the reforming catalyst in an amount of 3 to 20 mass%.

Claim 33 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 25, wherein said at least one noble metal component (d) selected from the group consisting of a ruthenium component, a platinum component, a rhodium component, a palladium component, and an iridium component is contained in the reforming catalyst in an amount of 0.1 to 8 mass% as reduced to noble metal element(s).

Claim 34 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 25, wherein the manganese oxide (b) is contained in the reforming catalyst in an amount of 3 to 20 mass%.

Claim 35 (New): The hydrocarbon reforming catalyst as described in claim 19, which further contains at least one species selected from the group consisting of an alkali metal component and an alkaline earth metal component.

Claim 36 (New): A method for producing hydrogen comprising reforming a hydrocarbon by the use of a reforming catalyst as recited in claim 19.

Claim 37 (New): The method for producing hydrogen as described in claim 36, wherein the reforming is steam reforming, autothermal reforming, partial-oxidation reforming, or carbon dioxide reforming.

Claim 38 (New): A fuel cell system comprising a reformer employing a reforming catalyst as recited in claim 19, and a fuel cell employing, as a fuel, hydrogen produced by said reformer.